



## *Fort Polk, Louisiana*

# *IG NEWSLETTER*

*First Quarter, FY 2006*

***RIGHT...  
THEN  
FORWARD***

#### Inside this Issue:

<i>Notes from the Inspector General</i>	1-2
<i>Nonpayment of Government Travel Card (GTC)</i>	3
<i>Support for Dependents Outside of Military Housing</i>	3
<i>Training After Phase II Physicals</i>	3
<i>Mobile Personal Electronic Devices (MPED) Policy</i>	4
<i>Leaders Responsibilities for Counseling Soldiers</i>	5
<i>Request for Commander's Inquiry Due to Adverse NCOERs</i>	5
<i>Process for Terminating Housing with Picerne</i>	6
<i>Authorized use of Government Communication Systems</i>	6

The Secretary of the Army has determined that the publication of the periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business as required by law or the Department. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or of the command, but whenever possible, are supported by referenced Army regulations, policies, or procedures.

## **Notes from the Inspector General...**

### **Government Travel Card Delinquency**

LTC L. Wayne Magee, Jr.

The past thirty days have been inordinately challenging for the Soldiers and families at Fort Polk. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have placed demands upon us that were previously unimaginable. By every measure our Soldiers, civilians, and families have responded with compassion and incredible dignity.

As we move into Fall, many of our units are in the final stages of preparation for deployment. In the past few months, delinquent Government Travel Card (GTC) accounts have received greater attention. Helping our Soldiers responsibly manage their GTCs is without a doubt Commanders' business. I would like to discuss several tools Commanders can use to positively manage GTC delinquency: transaction review, split disbursement, and Defense Travel System (DTS).

A recent inspection revealed that some cardholders who are on delinquency reports appear to be using their GTC for other than official government use. Some card holders appear to use the GTC as if it were any other credit card. Purchases included what appeared to be gasoline for their vehicles at local gas stations, cash advances, and purchases at Wal-Mart and other local establishments in the communities surrounding Fort Polk. I strongly recommend all Commanders or their designated representative, normally the Agency Program Coordinator (APC), screen 33% of the active GTC accounts monthly to determine if there are unusual, suspicious, or clearly unauthorized purchases. This will ensure 100% screening quarterly. Screening will assist commands in identifying card holders who are using the GTC improperly and serve as a means to identify soldiers who may require financial assistance and/or counseling.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

Split disbursement is an excellent tool to assist commands with GTC delinquencies. However, many supervisors are not aware of the requirement to file split disbursement, and have not been requiring travelers to file for it prior to providing authorizing signatures on travel vouchers. This is a requirement per the Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation (DoDFMR) and is a means by which Soldiers pay their government travel card through electronic funds transfer (EFT). When supervisors are aware of the requirement for Soldiers to file for split disbursement, they can require it for every voucher. For example, if a card holder has not properly marked the box for split disbursement, the supervisor refuses to sign. Likewise, if a card holder has specified split disbursement in an amount much lower than the balance owed for TDY expenses, the supervisor refuses to sign.

DTS is also a tool for reducing GTC delinquency. I strongly recommend Fort Polk units fully implement this system and use it whenever possible. DTS will not solely resolve card holder delinquency problems. Funding is only available in DTS if the fund cite is loaded for the particular unit to which a Soldier belongs. Certain fund cites, for example, Military Training Specific Allotment (MTSA) funds, are not loaded for use by individuals and units. They are controlled by Army Schools and authorize TDY for Pre-Command Course (PCC), Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer Course (ANCOC), and similar schools. Any Soldier going to these schools must get DD Form 1610 travel orders. They cannot arrange travel to these schools through DTS. Again, using DTS to the fullest extent possible will reduce delinquencies, but it is not the solution.

As of July 2005, Soldiers clear the GTC portion of their checklist at the APC level. This means every Soldier clearing must go through the APC's office and have their account deactivated and cleared (if PCSing with no TDY en route). Soldiers who have a balance on their GTC are not allowed to clear until the balance is paid. Recommend flagging Soldiers with delinquent balances and preventing PCS or separation until the balance is paid. Many Fort Polk units are currently fielding APCs at the battalion level.

The articles in this newsletter represent actual questions/issues presented to us and our own observations. If you have any questions or a topic you would like us to cover in future issues, drop us a line.

As always, I am always honored to have the opportunity to serve so many great Soldiers and civilians. If there is any support I can provide, please feel free to contact me directly at 531-2100/7878. ATW!



## **Can a Commander garnish a Soldier's pay for non payment of the Government Travel Card ?**

By: SFC Stanley Grosso

No. Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation Volume 9, Chapter 3, Paragraph 030804, Salary Offset, "Under regulations promulgated in Volumes 7A and 8 of this Regulation, and upon written request of the card contractor [in this case, Bank of America the Department [in this case, the Army] will, on behalf of the government travel charge card contractor, collect by deduction from the amount of pay owed to the cardholder any funds the cardholder owes to the government travel charge card contractor as a result of delinquencies not disputed by the cardholder on the government travel charge card.



## **Is a Soldier obligated to pay support to a spouse who does not live in government quarters even if the Soldier is not receiving BAH or has not cleared government quarters?**

By: SFC Stanley Grosso

Yes. AR 608-99 Paragraph 2-7 (a) 5 states "A Soldier's obligation to pay BAH II-WITH to the family members will begin on the date that the family members vacate the government quarters. The obligation to make this support payment begins even if the Soldier has not cleared government quarters and is not entitled to draw BAH-WITH.



## **Can a Soldier Train After A Phase II Chapter Physical?**

By: SFC Lisa Shropshire

A part of the processing of a Soldier's separation in a Chapter/MEB action is a Phase I and Phase II physical. The Office of the Inspector General receives frequent requests for assistance due to a Commander not knowing if a Soldier has to continue to train after his Phase II physical. There is also the question of Soldiers wondering why the command is taking them to the field after their Phase II physical, and what happens if they get injured. Unfortunately, the regulation does not address any training restrictions for Soldiers following a Phase II physical. It is the responsibility of the Commander and leaders to ensure the Soldier being chaptered or going through the Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) process remain in the same state of physical readiness they were during their Phase II physical. If a Soldier does get injured after the Phase II physical, the responsibility may lie on the Commander. This injury will also result in the Soldier remaining on active duty until an inquiry can be conducted as to the nature of the injury and until the injury can be properly evaluated and repaired. The Commander entrusted to the care of Soldiers being Chaptered/MEB is responsible for their health, welfare and safety. With proper leadership, discipline and motivation, a Soldier will continue to earn a full day's pay for a full days work following the Phase II physical. For questions on physical exams for Soldier pending Chapter/MEB process, you may contact Miss Pam Parent, Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer (PEBLO) at 531-3829.



## What is the Fort Polk policy on use of cellular phones and other electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle?

By: SFC John Edwards

Command Policy Memorandum PMO-03, Use of Mobile Personal Electronic Devices (MPEDs) on the Fort Polk Military Installation, 22 June 2005, defines MPEDs and the rules for their use while in a motor vehicle on Fort Polk. Para 4a defines MPEDs as follows: "Mobile Personal Electronic Device (MPED) – Any handheld or portable electronic device, including, but not limited to, cellular phones, personal data assistants, portable electronic e-mail devices, and handheld video game devices." Para 4b states "Hands-Free Mobile Personal Device – A MPED that has an internal feature or function or that is equipped with an attachment or addition by which the user may use the MPED without the use of either hand, whether or not either hand is necessary to activate, deactivate, or initiate a function of the MPED. Examples include mobile personal electronic devices with speakerphone capabilities or vehicles equipped with hands-free communications equipment."

The policy for use of these items is explained in Command Policy Memorandum PMO-03, Use of Mobile Personal Electronic Devices (MPEDs) on the Fort Polk Military Installation, Para 5.

"5. Policy: Except as otherwise provided in this memorandum, the use of a MPED while operating a motorized vehicle in motion on Fort Polk is prohibited. Vehicle operators may operate MPEDs only after the vehicle has been safely stopped off of the roadway and placed in park.

a. This policy does not prevent a passenger in a moving vehicle from using a MPED.

This policy does not prevent the operator of a moving vehicle from using a hands-free MPED. However, the use of hands-free devices requiring headphones, earphones, or other listening devices affixed to the operators head are prohibited."

Exceptions to this policy are explained in Para 6.

"6. Exceptions: This policy does not apply to the following:

a. Emergency responders such as the military police, DA Police, firefighters, EMTs, MEDEVAC crews, and hazardous material handlers responding to emergency situations.

b. Operators of tactical vehicles using tactical radios.

c. Operators of vehicles in "the box" in support of JRTC rotational activities.

Range control personnel operating government vehicles while using official radio systems."

This policy is dated 22 June 2005, however a 30 day implementation period was observed after the effective date. This means as of the 23rd of July, military and DA police began issuing citations for this offense.



## What are my responsibilities for counseling Soldiers?

By: SFC John Edwards

Developing our subordinates is every leader's responsibility; our best tool for this is counseling. According to FM 22-100, Appendix C, August 1999, "Developmental counseling is subordinate-centered communication that produces a plan outlining actions that subordinates must take to achieve individual and organizational goals." It is vitally important that during counseling the subordinate is not simply a passive listener, but rather they should be actively involved in identifying their strengths and weaknesses as well as establishing goals. This counseling will be captured on a DA Form 4856-E Developmental Counseling Form.

Counseling occurs for many different reasons, and can be event oriented or performance and professional growth counseling. Many Soldiers perceive all counseling as negative, especially event-oriented counseling. It is the responsibility of leaders to dispel this myth by remembering to counsel for positive events as well.

Event-oriented counseling can be done for a variety of reasons and could occur before or after the event, depending on the type of event. Some types of event-oriented counseling include: counseling for specific instances of superior or substandard performance, reception and integration counseling, crisis counseling, referral counseling, promotion counseling, and adverse separation counseling.



## Can I request a Commanders Inquiry on my NCOER?

By: Mr. Joseph Pipes

YES. AR- 623-205 Chapter 6, Evaluation Report Redress Program Section II. Commanders are required to look into alleged errors, injustices, and illegalities in NCO-ERs. The rated NCO or anyone having knowledge of the alleged illegality, injustice, or violation may bring such matters to the Commander's attention. The primary purpose of the Commander's Inquiry is to provide a greater degree of command involvement in preventing obvious injustices to the rated NCO and to correct errors before they become a matter of permanent record. A secondary purpose is to obtain command involvement in clarifying errors or injustices after the evaluation report is accepted at USAEREC, CNGB, a State Adjutant General's office, or HRC. However, in these after-the-fact cases, this paragraph is not intended to be a substitute for the appeals process, which is the primary means of addressing errors and injustices after they have become a matter of permanent record. The provisions of [AR 15-6](#) do not normally apply to inquiries of this nature; however, the Commander may determine the provisions of AR 15-6 apply in specific instances.

## What is the policy for terminating quarters with Picerne Military Housing?

By: SFC Terrill Turner

Polk-Picerne Partners, LLC, Resident Responsibility Guide, chapter 5, paragraph 5-2, states, "The resident will provide 30 days written notice to terminate this lease. Early release from the 12 month term of occupancy will be authorized if the Resident is required to move by PCS orders, is discharged from the services, or retires; for early release, the Resident must provide a copy of the orders to the Owner with the written notice. The Owner may approve other early releases on a **case-by-case basis for extraordinary circumstances with timely written notice from the Resident**. Orders received by the Resident with less than 30 days advance notice will authorize early release.

The conditions in which a Resident may terminate the Lease of Fort Polk Family Housing are:

Thirty days prior to PCS unless authorized retention

Thirty days prior to Separation/Retirement

Voluntary

Involuntary (nonpayment, violation of Lease/ Guide, etc.)

Giving Picerne 30 days advance written notice, **plus paying all monies due through the term of occupancy stated on the Lease**.

**A minimum thirty-day notice will be required from all families moving out of housing. A Resident whose PCS/Separation orders are written with less than a thirty-day notice will generally be the only exception. However, they will be required to provide immediate notification to their Neighborhood Management Office upon receipt of their PCS/Separation Orders."**

## What is the policy for Government communication systems and equipment to include Government-owned telephones, facsimile machines, electronic mail, Internet systems, and commercial systems the federal Government pays for use?

By: CPT Rae E. Schultz

DoD Directive 5500.7R Joint Ethics Regulation (JER) Para 2-301 states, "**Shall be for official use and authorized purposes only.**"

JER, 2-301a(1), states, "**Official use includes** emergency communications and communications that the DoD Component determines are necessary in the interest of the Federal Government. Official use may include, when approved by theater Commanders in the interest of morale and welfare, communications by military members and DoD employees who are deployed for extended periods away from home on official DoD business."

JER, 2-301a(2), states, "**Authorized purposes includes:** Brief calls home while TDY to notify family of official transportation or schedule changes. Personal communications from the workplace that are most reasonably made while at the workplace when the Agency Designee determines that such communications: (a) Do not adversely affect official duty performance; (b) Are of reasonable duration and frequency, and whenever possible made during after duty hours or lunch periods; (c) Serve a legitimate public interest (such as keeping employees at their desks, enhancing professional skills of the employees; job searching in response to downsizing); (d) Do not put Federal Government communication systems to uses that would affect adversely on DoD; (e) Do not over burden the communication system and create additional cost to DoD."